



## ENVISIONING THE First Street Promenade

At the Placemaking workshop, held at the Kahler Hotel November 9, 2005, a vision was developed for First Street and adjacent areas in downtown Rochester. This vision, from which the idea of the First Street Promenade springs, includes the following elements:

- A central gathering place should be developed. First Street Promenade will link First Avenue, Peace Plaza and the Galleria with Annenberg Plaza, Second Avenue and the Gonda Building during all seasons. The city already does a good job catering to visitors of the Mayo Clinic. It should also reach out to downtown employees and, in the future, to residents who live downtown.
- Start simple. The physical design for the First Street Promenade is a framework from which to build activities and uses upon; in a sense, a stage for which Rochester's citizens and visitors can perform. We recommend the framework be kept simple at first, allowing for experimentations to decipher what works best in the space, and then improved upon as best seen fit.
- Develop a seasonal, all-weather strategy and events plan. Throughout all seasons of the year, the First Street Promenade and Peace and Annenberg plazas should have attractions to attract people. Winter activities could include a temporary ice skating rink, ice and snow sculpture competitions, and hot chocolate and coffee vendors. Summer activities could include markets and outdoor dining.
- The pedestrian should be king (or queen). Throughout the area between the Galleria and Peace Plaza, Annenberg Plaza and the Gonda Building and First and Second Avenues, the pedestrian should take priority. Traffic should be calmed throughout the area by extending curbs at intersections, clearly marking crosswalks, and adding angle parking, which has the added benefit of creating more convenient access to shops and increasing the perception that this area is primarily for shopping, dining and strolling.



- Street level retail should be a priority. New types of storefront retail should be added in some spots while existing retail uses should be moved and/or enhanced in others. This will likely require some retail analysis and a possible retail repositioning of the existing and new shops within the Kahler Hotel and the Galleria. Locating restaurants and cafes at street level with the flexibility to offer dining on the sidewalk whenever weather permits is a priority.
- Emphasize a lively mix of downtown businesses. At street level, the visual impact of medical and financial institutions should be minimized, while the visibility of other downtown activity should be maximized. With the multitude of medical related services and destinations in this area, it is easy to be satisfied that the downtown has enough destinations. The danger is in allowing these important uses to dominate the entire downtown pedestrian experience.
- The district should be lightened and brightened up. There is a striking lack of color in this area at the pedestrian level. Colored lighting should be considered wherever possible to provide a feeling of liveliness and activity along the street.
- There should be no blank walls in this area. The ground floors of all buildings should present something of interest, whether it be a shop (with doors that open to the street), a street level exhibit, and where these things are not possible, a mural or informational display and lighting.
- General orientation at street level should be improved. It is now common for people to get disoriented in this area—to not know where they are and what types of cultural, retail and other services are available. And the three tiers of pedestrian circulation (skyway, street level and subway) make it difficult to know all of the assets downtown offers. A kiosk, and better signage on the streets and buildings would help to address this problem and provide more visual and physical connections between the three layers.

